



# Town of Berwyn Heights

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**MAYOR**  
Amanda M. Dewey

**COUNCIL MEMBERS**  
Jodie A. Kulpa-Eddy (Mayor Pro Tem)  
Christopher S. Brittan Powell  
Jason W. Papanikolas  
Ethan D. Sweep

## Worksession Minutes October 5, 2020 | 7:00 pm

This meeting was held by videoconference due to the ongoing COVID-19 health emergency. The meeting was broadcast on Berwyn Heights cable TV channels and streamed on the Town website. Residents were given the opportunity to join the meeting via Zoom and comment by telephone and email.

The meeting was called to order at 7:09 p.m. Present were Mayor Amanda Dewey, Mayor Pro Tempore (MPT) Jodie Kulpa-Eddy, Councilmembers (CMs) Christopher Brittan-Powell, Jason Papanikolas, and Ethan Sweep. Also present were Interim Town Manager (ITM) Laura Allen, Town Clerk Kerstin Harper, Code Director Hollyce Goodwin, Treasurer Michelle Rodriguez, as well as guests PGC Department of the Environment Staff Jeffrey deHahn, Frank Galosi, Neil Weinstein and Pete Littleton; UMD Campus Community Connections Coordinator Andrew Fellows; Beltway Plaza Representatives Kap Kapastin, Matt Tedesco and Alex Villegas.

### 1. Announcements

Mayor Dewey made announcements regarding options for voting in the upcoming Presidential election, and extension of the 2020 Census response deadline to October 31. Enumerators are still in the neighborhood to complete the Census.

### 2. Approval of the Agenda

MPT Kulpa-Eddy moved to approve the agenda. CM Sweep seconded. Mayor Dewey proposed to add MML legislative priorities to the agenda. There were no objections. The agenda was adopted 5 to 0 as amended.

### 3. Presentations

**PGC stormwater briefing:** Mayor Dewey welcomed Jeffrey deHahn and Frank Galosi with the PGC Department of the Environment (DoE) Stormwater Management Division, Neil Weinstein with the Low Impact Development Center (LIDC) and Pete Littleton with Corvias for a presentation on the County's clean water program and clean water partnership.

Mr. deHahn gave an overview of the Stormwater Management Division's mission and responsibilities. The Division is tasked with the protection and oversight of Prince George's County waterways and meeting the federal mandates of the National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES). To achieve these goals, the Division has entered into a long-term partnership with Corvias to restore water quality through retrofitting and impervious area treatment projects. In addition, the Division administers a public-facing *Raincheck Rebate* program and *stormwater stewardship grant program*, which provide financing for installing devices to filter and reduce stormwater runoff.

Mr. Littleton provided details on Corvias' holistic approach to designing, building, and maintaining stormwater retrofit infrastructure as part of its clean water partnership with the County. The approach involves reaching out to the community and private property owners, hiring local small businesses, and working with local non-profits to ensure that the investment benefits the communities in which the projects are located. Mr. Galosi reviewed stormwater mitigation projects located in the Anacostia Watershed and in Berwyn Heights, including the Town Center raingarden, storm drains on BHES property, Nevada Street outfall retrofit, and several stormwater best management practices (BMP) implemented on private property. Neil Weinstein gave a brief overview of the County's Sustainability Division's public engagement programs, from *adopt-a-stream* to *green school partnerships*.

Messrs. DeHahn, Galosi, Littleton and Weinstein responded to Councilmembers' questions as follows:

- BHES stormwater drains are legacy devices that were installed years ago.
- County Stormwater Division is not aware of a 'jellyfish' stormwater device installed at the Public Works Yard entrance and therefore may not be maintaining it.
- Berwyn Heights may be eligible for grant funding if it were to convert trails to permeable paving. Technical advice for adding environmentally friendly pedestrian and bicycle amenities is available from the LIDC and other non-profits partnering with the County.
- M-NCPPC owns the green areas along Indian Creek and undertakes reforestation and other projects to control erosion and improve water quality. M-NCPPC's Environmental Section may be a starting point to explore cleanup efforts of Indian Creek.
- Groups of neighbors can coordinate efforts to abate a shared water runoff problem and obtain funding through the Raincheck Rebate program to build raingardens.
- The County can provide sample legislation on how it regulates stormwater problems.
- The efficacy of permeable pavers is determined by manufacturing quality, but mostly by installation and maintenance.
- Resident participation in the raincheck program can be improved by education and outreach. The County's Sustainability Division holds regular workshops on installation of rain barrels and raingardens as well as training workshops for contractors that can be hired for installation. The Chesapeake Bay Trust has dedicated experts on staff to advise property owners.
- The Stormwater Division and Chesapeake Trust can provide educational materials in Spanish.
- County will check if Town Center raingardens are in maintenance inventory and send out staff to inspect and discuss maintenance responsibilities. Aesthetic maintenance is often done by the community.

***Campus Community Connection (C3) stormwater project:*** Former College Park Mayor and UMD Campus Community Connections (C3) Coordinator Andrew Fellows was present to give an update on collaborative projects UMD students are working on for Berwyn Heights. The C3 program, in which Berwyn Heights participates, seeks to apply academic know-how and technical expertise to real world problems in the communities surrounding the University. Mr. Fellows said this year he teaches a group of information science students, 5 of whom are working on identifying areas with flooding problems in Berwyn Heights. They are looking for data on incidents of flooding the County may be collecting.

Mr. deHahn said data on flooding incidents might be gleaned from the County's citizens reporting system, Click 311, or from the three divisions that deal with stormwater in DoE, DPIE and DPW&T. County staff is happy to share the information. MPT Kulpa-Eddy noted that DPW&T performed a hydrological survey in Berwyn Heights in 2015 following a severe flooding event, which maps inadequacies in the Town's storm drain system. Mr. Galosi confirmed that DPW&T has information about the County's storm drain system within each subsector and is preparing for the next phase of

hydrological analyses. Mr. Fellows said his students would like to mine any available County data to identify those areas and properties with stormwater problems that would most benefit from relief.

Mr. Fellows provided additional background on the C3 program, as well as earlier efforts to improve water quality and mitigate flooding along Indian Creek among local jurisdictions. Examples include the Four Cities street sweeping program, the Town Center raingardens, advocacy for Indian Creek through Citizens to Conserve and Restore Indian Creek (CCRIC), and the UMD Environmental Finance Center's pet waste program. The C3 program currently has 8 participants. Berwyn Heights has submitted 10 projects for collaboration with the University, of which 6 are being worked on, including several that are focused on education and community engagement.

Mr. Fellows noted that Berwyn Heights is also participating in a grant proposal developed by UMD's Smart Cities initiative for a 'demand response' project that seeks to reduce energy consumption during periods of peak demand. If the grant is successful, it could result in significant energy savings and financial returns for participants.

Mayor Dewey said the Council is looking forward to the results of this year's collaboration projects and thanked Mr. Fellows for the update.

***Beltway Plaza redevelopment:*** Quantum Co. General Counsel Kap Kapastin, McNamee Hosea Attorney Matt Tedesco, and Rodgers Consulting Representatives Alex Villegas were present for an update on the redevelopment of the Beltway Plaza mall. Mr. Tedesco gave an overview of the project. He said the redevelopment of the mall has been planned for decades but a conceptual site plan and preliminary plan of subdivision have only recently been approved. A detailed site plan for phase I is now under review with approval expected early in 2021.

Mr. Tedesco said phase I includes the redevelopment of parking lots in the rear of the mall into residential housing and pedestrian improvements along Greenbelt Road, a priority for both Berwyn Heights and the City of Greenbelt. The Greenbelt Road corridor was the subject of a 2018 Urban Land Institute Technical Assistance Panel (ULI TAP), in which Beltway Plaza participated. It produced recommendations for improvements some of which were incorporated in the plans.

Alex Villegas gave an overview of the phase I detailed site plan. The residential component will include 4 housing blocks, and a hotel along Cherrywood Road. The residential units will set the stage for renewal of the commercial center. Other changes include connector roads through the center of the mall, new pedestrian/ bicycle facilities along Greenbelt Road and Breezewood Drive, which connect to the regional trail network, and an indoor community center with state-of-the-art recreational facilities. The future mixed-use development will comply with current stormwater regulations by incorporating landscaped streets and multiple parks/ greenspaces with micro bio-retention facilities

Mr. Kapastin, Tedesco, and Villegas responded to questions from the Council as follows:

- Adequate school facilities - the developers are bound by State regulations as delegated to Prince George's County, which require them to pay a school facilities surcharge fee to the County at the time of permitting. The fee is used by the County to build or update schools as needed. In phase 1, the school surcharge fee paid by Beltway Plaza developers is approximately \$7 million and \$20 million upon full build out. However, the type of housing proposed for Beltway Plaza is not expected to attract many families with school-aged children.
- Stormwater management - the new development will exceed current MDE stormwater requirements with wetlands and bio retention facilities throughout the property.

- Pedestrian access - substantial improvements to pedestrian crossings along Greenbelt Road are planned that will slow traffic and increase safety.
- Housing mix – of 2,500 planned residential units up to 2,000 will be set aside for rental; for the remaining units the developers are exploring options for seniors, students and cooperative living. Potential impact on Berwyn Heights rental housing has not been studied.
- Traffic impact – the developers performed traffic analysis on 16-18 intersections around Beltway Plaza that were reviewed by M-NCPPC’s Transportation Section and SHA as part of the preliminary plan of subdivision. All current intersections were found to be adequate under the County’s transportation guidelines. Greenbelt required additional tests.
- Public Safety – impacts on police and fire department service were studied as part of the preliminary plan of subdivision and found to be adequate. Developers will pay a public safety surcharge a portion of which will go to the City of Greenbelt. The cost of one dedicated police officer for the development will be shared with the city. Beltway Plaza maintains its own security detail, which has been able to stop car thefts and keep other incidents very low. Beltway Plaza security would coordinate with Berwyn Heights Police if desired.
- Professional services – doctors’ offices and other professional services would be included in the later phases of development.
- Impact on development along Greenbelt Road and larger area – Beltway Plaza developers are eager to implement the ULI-TAP recommendations for improving the Greenbelt Road corridor. They are also thinking about redeveloping the Staples and former Money One properties they own in Berwyn Heights for mixed use once the Beltway Plaza build-out has started. Research indicates that a hotel would do well at the proposed location. Physical stores, including discount stores, will remain part of the mix. Small retailers will be supported with an e-platform to sell merchandise online. The mall will also continue to offer community services such as food giveaways, voter registrations, Census support and seasonal celebrations. The developers believe Beltway Plaza can serve as a model for other development in the area.

#### **4. Discussion Items**

***Beltway widening draft environmental impact statement:*** Mayor Dewey provided a letter for Council’s review that will be submitted to the Maryland Department of Transportation as a formal comment on the I-495 and I-270 Managed Lanes Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) by November 9. Councilmembers are requested to provide feedback.

Councilmembers proposed to add concerns about impact of the Beltway expansion on waterways and about utilizing a public-private partnership (P3) framework for completing the project, as well as an endorsement for alternatives to interstate improvements, such as on-demand transit and commuter incentives. Mayor Dewey will incorporate these ideas into the letter to be approved at the October Town meeting.

***CARES Act funding update:*** ITM Allen gave an update on the CARES Act coronavirus relief funds Prince George’s County is distributing to municipalities on behalf of the federal government. Berwyn Heights submitted an application for CARES Act funds in the amount of \$199,000 in July 2020 and has received the first reimbursement. Several items in the Town’s 1<sup>st</sup> reimbursement request were disallowed but added to a contingency fund for other potential expenses. The County did not approve the Town’s request to fund hazardous duty pay for the Code Enforcement staff and the Town Clerk. Rather than reduce the Town’s CARES allocation, they transferred the amount of those requests to a contingency line item to enable the Town to reallocate the funding to other expenses. The Town submitted a revised spending plan by October 1 to account for the contingency funds, which were allocated to Public Safety salaries. The revised plan has been approved. Council is requested to give

input on a business relief program developed by Code Director Goodwin, for which \$60,000 is requested, and a \$20,000 deep cleaning contract that is proposed to be piggybacking on a County contract. Director Goodwin and Treasurer Rodriguez are present to answer any questions.

Councilmembers suggested that the deep cleaning contract include cleaning of such behind-the-scenes items as air ducts and water lines prior to the reopening of the Senior Center, as well as a more thorough cleaning of the Town office. ITM Allen is finding out what type of cleaning other municipalities have had done. No objections were expressed to piggybacking on the County's cleaning contract.

Responding to Councilmembers' questions about the business relief program, Director Goodwin said about 50 Berwyn Heights businesses may be eligible for relief funds. It is unclear whether there will be enough interest to use the \$60,000 allocated to the program. The City of Greenbelt saw fewer applications than expected with its business relief program. ITM Allen said all applications are due by November 20 and will be kept securely stored in her locked office. The Town must review the applications and submit them to the County for reimbursement by mid-December because CARES Act funds must be spent by the end of the year.

Councilmembers proposed to add a requirement that businesses be in compliance with Prince George's COVID-19 protocols and to substitute Maryland's *business in good standing* certificate for some of the questions listed on the application form. ITM Allen will incorporate the Council's suggestions and prepare a revised business relief fund proposal for approval at the October Town meeting.

***Event policy update:*** Mayor Dewey explained the Council has discussed repeatedly what types of events Town organizations may hold while COVID restrictions remain in place. It was agreed that events should be virtual through 2020 while the Council develops a comprehensive policy for rollout in 2021 that addresses potential risks and liability. ITM Allen said to date she has collected event policies from other municipalities and spoken to city managers about what type of events are held in their communities to lay the groundwork for a Berwyn Heights policy.

Mayor Dewey proposed the Council take a new look at the Town organization policy and the relationships it defines between the Town and its organizations. Some organizations are not appointed by the Council nor receive Town funds. These might have more leeway to determine their own event policy.

***MML legislative action requests:*** Mayor Dewey said the Maryland Municipal League (MML) each year sets priorities that it plans to pursue in the State legislature. This year the MML legislative committee is proposing only one priority, the restoration of Highway User Revenue Funds (HUR). Councilmembers are requested to indicate whether or not they support this legislative action request and/ or give input.

MPT Kulpa-Eddy asked to what extent HUR funding has been restored and what level of funding is being sought. Mayor Dewey replied MML says current funding levels are at 85% which would leave 15% to be requested. MPT Kulpa-Eddy said it should be clarified which year serves as the baseline for full funding.

## 5. E-Newsletter

MPT Kulpa-Eddy provided a draft e-newsletter for review and summarized the content. Council asked to add the deadline for requesting absentee ballots to the election article. Mayor Dewey noted that a new Public Information Aide has been hired and will soon take on the production of the e-newsletter.

## **6. Department Reports**

Mayor Dewey reported that BHPD instituted a new pet registration program, proposed by a Police intern, which will make it easier to reunite lost pets with their owners. Berwyn Heights and neighboring cities have seen an increase in thefts from cars, mostly when doors are left unlocked. BHPD and the Code Department have been working together on ensuring businesses comply with the County's COVID-19 protocols. Later this week, the Council will attend the MML fall conference, which will again be held virtually.

MPT Kulpa-Eddy reported that WMATA is requesting citizen input on proposed budget cuts through an online survey, while the Anacostia Watershed Society is polling County residents about their knowledge of the environment in an online survey.

CM Papanikolas announced that the Town is conducting a survey both online, and in the Bulletin, to request resident input in the ongoing Town manager search. An in-person citizen panel could not be established this time due to coronavirus restrictions. The deadline is October 7.

CM Brittan Powell said that the Code Compliance Department has a lot of work and is following up on some complaints regarding political yard signs. He hopes the Town will be able to move forward with some of the clean water initiatives mentioned earlier in the meeting.

CM Sweep announced a modified trash collection schedule for the coming week due to a holiday, as well as the street sweeper coming to Town.

## **7. Town Council Schedule**

The Council reviewed the upcoming schedule. No changes were made.

## **8. Citizen Comments**

MPT Kulpa-Eddy said residents have received letters from Pepco announcing a round of tree pruning around power lines that was supposed to start in September, and a letter announcing a public meeting on a County-wide map amendment in November. ITM Allen said Pepco has a permit for the tree trimming project that will take place in October and has given detailed information to the Town. She will have this information posted to the Town website. Mayor Dewey said the Shade Tree Board has reviewed the list of trees to be removed by Pepco this summer. The trees are either dead or small, with the exception of a few trees on Cunningham.

The meeting was adjourned at 10:43 p.m.

Signed: *Kerstin Harper*, Town Clerk